

April 24, 2002 Meeting
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
Issue Paper

Issue:

Columbia/Snake River Main Stem TMDLs

Background:

- The Colville Reservation extends to the center of the Columbia River. The northern boundary of the reservation is at about River Mile 721 above Grand Coulee Dam. The reservation runs along the Columbia downstream to the Okanogan River.
- The Tribe has Water Quality Standards that were promulgated by EPA.
- Tribal Water Quality Standards for Total Dissolved Gas and Temperature are exceeded in the Columbia River within the reservation boundary.
- EPA plans to establish a Temperature TMDL for the entire Columbia River within the United States and a Total Dissolved Gas TMDL for the reservation waters of the Columbia River.
- Washington State will establish the gas TMDL for the rest of the Columbia. The State and Reservation Gas TMDLs will be established jointly or simultaneously by Washington and EPA and will essentially be a single document.

Tribes Concerns:

Temperature

- The Tribe feels that the temperature TMDL is mostly aimed at restoring anadromous salmon which are extinct above Chief Joseph Dam.
- The Tribe has non-anadromous salmon fisheries above Chief Joseph Dam and in Lake Roosevelt that require cold water.
- While Grand Coulee is a significant cause of warm temperatures in Lake Roosevelt, there is little that can be done operationally at Grand Coulee to lower temperatures in the lake.
- There are potential operational measures at Grand Coulee that could lower temperatures downstream.
- The Tribe is concerned that TMDL implementation actions to cool off the river

below Grand Coulee Dam will exacerbate temperature problems in the lake. The lake tends to be a little warm for the cold water fauna and implementation could make it warmer still.

- The Tribe believes that sources in Canada contribute to the warming of Lake Roosevelt and the Columbia River.
- The Tribe believes that the Federal Government needs to address this issue with Canada and that we are missing an opportunity to do so. Canada is developing water use plans for the river and that is the mechanism for negotiating operational changes to address temperature problems caused by Canadian dams and facilities.

Total Dissolved Gas

- Total Dissolved Gas enters Lake Roosevelt from Canada and from the Spokane River.
- The Tribe is concerned that we are not doing enough about gas from Canada and that we are doing nothing about gas from the Spokane River.
- We do participate in the Trans-Boundary Gas Group which is a bi-national interagency group working toward a system-wide program for mitigating gas impacts.
- The Spokane River TMDL is scheduled by Ecology to begin in 2004 (Scoping begins in 2003).
- Little is being done to reduce gas caused by Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph. A plan has been approved but not funded by Congress.
- The Gas TMDL won't be much of a step forward because the sources impacting Lake Roosevelt won't be addressed (Canada and Spokane River) and the implementation step for correcting gas problems below Grand Coulee has already been designed, but not funded.

Tribal Request:

- The Tribe has requested a full time EPA staff person to be stationed at the Tribal Offices to address these concerns. They believe that a senior staff person would be able to work with Canada on the water use plans, and work more closely with the Bureau and the Corps on gas issues. The staff person working daily on these issues could strengthen our international relationship with Canada and perhaps get the Corps and the Bureau to place a high enough priority on the gas work to get it funded. There are a number of other issues that this person could work on for the Tribe: contaminated sediments from Canadian smelters, contaminated fish tissue.